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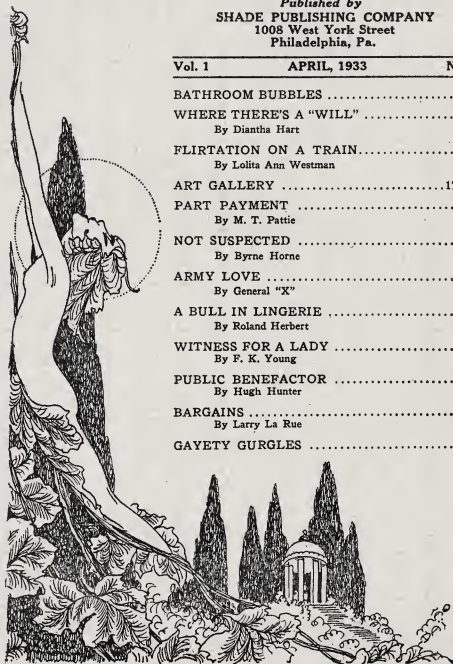
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# GAYETY

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Vol. 1	APRIL, 1933	No. 6
BATHROOM BUBBLES .....		3
WHERE THERE'S A "WILL" .....		5
By Diantha Hart		
FLIRTATION ON A TRAIN.....		11
By Lolita Ann Westman		
ART GALLERY .....	17, 41	
PART PAYMENT .....		25
By M. T. Pattie		
NOT SUSPECTED .....		30
By Byrne Horne		
ARMY LOVE .....		33
By General "X"		
A BULL IN LINGERIE .....		35
By Roland Herbert		
WITNESS FOR A LADY .....		39
By F. K. Young		
PUBLIC BENEFACTOR .....		53
By Hugh Hunter		
BARGAINS .....		54
By Larry La Rue		
GAYETY GURGLES .....		59



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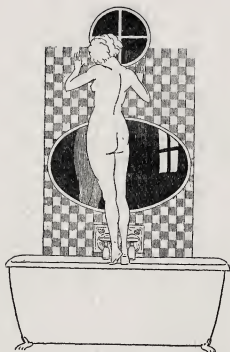
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## *Bathroom Bubbles*

*"The boys call her Mare—none of them can halter!"*



*It takes more than a henna rinse to make a red-headed girl.*



*Fine feathers won't make a love nest, but a little down will do the trick.*



*Usually the fellow who sings the loudest about "Our Country" doesn't own a foot of it.*



*Stenographers are luckier than many office workers. While others have been taking cuts, they have been getting advances.*



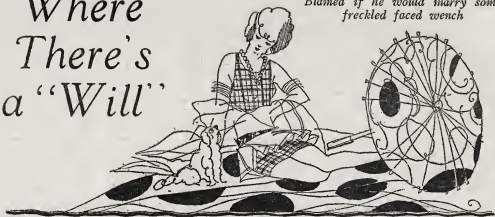
*Words don't always mean what they seem. A racket, for instance, usually refers to something done on the quiet.*



Says Manicure Mayme: "You've got to hand it to the sheik who doesn't let his left hand know what his right hand undoeth."

# Where There's a "Will"

*Blamed if he would marry some  
freckled faced wench*



*Oh, my! Oh, me! On my way to marry a fortune and positively  
the most beautiful girl in all the world to play with for just one day*

By DIANTHA HART

SPENCER WINTHROP gazed disconsolately out the window of the fast-moving train. A scowl disfigured his bronzed features. Ye gods, what a life! One mess right after another. Hell, he'd chuck this trip and let the old man's fortune go. Blamed if he'd marry some freckled country wench to please a crazy uncle, who was dead anyway. Still, a hundred grand is a hundred grand. Maybe he'd go through with it, and then split the inheritance, and pack the girl off to Reno. By jove, that's the cracker! Little Spencer's not so dumb; no, siree!

The scowl lifted and the young man straightened up in his seat. His eyes roamed over his fellow passengers and paused a moment to meditate on the silk-sheathed limbs of a girl across the aisle and two down. She was facing Spencer and, to all appearances, was fast asleep. Her feet were resting on the seat in front of her. Spencer blinked in surprise at the delicious curves that shaped her ankle and swept upward to the knee, and then he swallowed dryly in contemplation of their continuance. He liked her dress. It hugged her tight about the swell of her young breasts and clung just as distractingly about the rest of her. Pretty face, too. He could see just a glint of copper locks through the short veil of her tricky turban. Hot little number, no

kidding. Bet she'd be a pippin on a party. It'd be fun to find out. Hell no harm in that even if you have to marry a damn little cow from the sticks. Wish she'd wake up. Oh, oh, there goes her purse.

Spencer was on his feet almost before the purse clashed on the floor. The girl awoke with a start, her eyes flew open, and she gazed bewildered at Spencer as he handed the purse to her. She removed her feet from their perch and tucked them demurely beneath her. Spenceer appropriated the vacant seat, eluding her on the folly of loving one's belongings, etc. He introduced himself as Spenceer Winthrop and gave an embroidered account of a business tour he was pursuing for his firm. In return, she confided that she was Julia Aberle and was on her way to visit relatives.

Spencer was delighted with his closer inspection. She was young, deliciously young; and lovely, ravishingly so. He could hardly control his hands from caressing the soft curve of her cheek and the warm white neck and the rounded shoulder and the voluptuous breasts, fascinating in their movements as she breathed. Gad, what a girl.

The roar of the train bothered his hearing, he explained, and she graciously made a place for him beside her. The perfume of her nearness intoxicated him, but he kept a remarkable composure and gave an



interesting picture of the big town about ninety miles ahead. Seems he had to make an overnight stop there and planned to take in a certain well-known musical comedy. Had she seen it? No? What a pity! The critics had hailed it enthusiastically. Too bad her relatives were expecting her or she could stop off and see it, too. The girl laughed and explained that that was a funny part of it. She was a whole day ahead of

her schedule, and they weren't expecting her at all so soon.

Spencer almost shouted in glee, but instead, he murmured politely that such a coincidence should not be ignored, and he would be very delighted to arrange for a ticket for her and escort her to the theatre, should she feel timid in so large a city. Julia gazed thoughtfully out the window, and said a trifle wistfully that she hardly knew whether it would be all right or not, for "you see—I'm—I'm engaged," and she turned appealing eyes up to Spencer.

The inward spirit of the man writhed in turmoil, and then he took her hand in his impulsively, and looking deep into her eyes, he spoke hurriedly: "Julia, I'm engaged, too, but think of it—here we are, you and I, young and all alone. Tomorrow we'll separate, never to meet again. We'll be married later on, and the years will slip by so fast. Life is so short. Let's cut loose, we two strangers, and live just this day and night for you and me, and then, forget. Why not snatch at happiness as we go along. Remember, we're only young once, and now's the time to realize it. There'll be music at the Garden House. And we can dance and eat and drink. Then the comedy. We'll take in the Peacock Palace. And then there'll be just you and me, all alone, no one to ever know that we even knew each other."

Julia's breath quickened. She didn't know what to do! It sounded so gay and so inviting, and he was so attractive, and yet it sounded wicked, too. But why not be wicked, just once, to live and love and dance and drink like lots of folks who did it every day. Just once, and nobody would ever know. Why not? And with a reckless, carefree smile she said she would. Spencer almost kissed her. (And what a close "almost"! ) The rest of the ninety miles shrank rapidly as they latched and relatched enough entertainment to busy them a week.

Dinner at the Garden House was indescribable. They ate and danced intermittently to music that set their hearts in rhythm. In an unbelievably short time, they had to tear themselves away and fare forth to the Follies. What a show! The critics were lukewarm in their praise, according to Julia and Spencer as the curtain swayed together on the finale.



*She had copper locks that peeped through a tricky little hat*



And now for the Peacock Palace. Julia was open-mouthed in awe at the brilliance and gayety that greeted them. Thick dull-gold columns rose to the high ceiling. Modern art ran the gamut in the colorful murals that adorned the walls. The guests! Never had the girl seen such an array of sophisticated beauty set off by colorful velvets, luxurious furs, diamonds! Wine that slipped so coolly down her throat and then caused warm shivers to course through her body.

Spencer paid little heed to the gay crowd about him. His eyes saw nothing but the swirl of flame hair, the big soft brown eyes, the full parted lips, the soft white arms, and the exquisite body of his partner. He delighted in the adorable way she held her long Russian cigarette. With every sip of the precious wine she radiated new beauty.

'Neath lowered lights they danced to the strains of haunting music. Never a word did they speak—just clung close to each other, dancing where the music willed them.

At last they found their way to the New Westerall, where Spencer had engaged a suite. After dispensing with the sleepy bell-boy, Julia felt guilty qualms wittin her, but Spencer gathered her slight luscious body in his huge embrace and kissed all disturbing thoughts away. They finally untangled, and Julia made for her bedroom. She extricated a promise from Spencer not to dare enter until she said he could.

For a short time he gazed wistfully at the closed door, then whistling softly to himself, he began divesting himself of his clothing. He then arrayed himself in a suit of gay silk pajamas and a light robe. He combed his hair, smoked a cigarette, drank thirstily from a bottle hidden in his suitcase, and at last there came a faint call from her room.

He bounded to the door and opened it. The room beyond was illuminated by only a frail bed light. Where was Julia? The bed was in smooth order. Then at the far corner of the room he saw her, reclining lazily on a chaise-lounge—her hair a riotous whirl, her eyes half-closed, her lips curving a teasing smile, and her lovely white form kissed by clinging green lace. He gathered her acquiescing body in his arms and kissed her long and fiercely. This was their night, and love and life were theirs.

When Spencer awoke the next day, the sun streamed boldly through the window. He reached over to caress a sleeping Julia, but Julia wasn't there. Had he been dreaming? He jumped up and frantically searched the rooms. There was not a sign of her. At last, fully convinced that she had left, he began a search for a message, and found one pinned to a corner of her pillow.

Dear Spencer: Last night was ours. And I loved it, but morning brings a vague regret and realization. I must have been mad. I shouldn't ever have come with you, I know, but I'm glad, glad! To think that such happiness could be ours! But I must say good-by. I can never forget.

JULIA.



*She was a hot little number—no kidding*

Spencer sat dejected for a long time. He realized that he actually loved the girl, and even if a hundred grand was a hundred grand—she was Julia! He swallowed a thick sob and jumped to his feet. He'd tell that old lawyer of his uncle to go to hell! He was going to marry Julia, that is, if he could find her.

And he could!

The train moved at snail-like speed toward his destination. He formulated speech after speech to hurl at the unsuspecting lawyer. No wicked old man, who was dead anyway, was going to make him marry a freckle-faced, not even for a fortune. Not when Julia was on the face of the earth; no siree!

The old devil, he'd tell him.

And so he did!

"I tell you, it's wicked—making a man marry a girl he doesn't know, has never seen and couldn't stomach if he had! No, sir, you can take every cent of his damned old money and burn it up! I can make my own living and marry the girl I want to! And furthermore—I shall!"

Just as Spencer finished his explosive oration the door of the office opened and a silent figure slipped into the room. Spencer froze and turned a black scowl toward the culprit and instantly melted.

"Julia!"

"Spencer!"

"Why, darling, what are you doing here?" He captured her hand and gazed adoringly at her.

"Why, I—that is—you see—my uncle—I—why I'm here to see him—." She pointed to the lawyer.

"Him? Is he your 'relative'?"

"You people know each other?" The bewildered attorney queried.

Julia and Spencer glanced at each other embarrassed.

"Well, er—we've never been introduced—," Spencer answered lamely.

"Well, well! Miss Aberle, may I present

Mr. Winthrop. You are distant cousins by marriage through my late client, James Winthrop, rather too technical a connection to explain. Miss Aberle, Mr. Winthrop here seems to be rather skeptical, shall we say—?"

"Why, my dear man, how preposterous!



*She'd be a pippin at a party*

I never intimated such a thing. Certainly not! I consider my uncle a very just and reasonable man. Explain the situation, please!" Poor Spencer blushed painfully and tried to bluster away his embarrassment.

"Most assuredly." The lawyer motioned them to be seated and began pulling papers and clippings and pictures from a drawer in his desk.

"Now I want you both to understand that James Winthrop was a very fine gentleman, very fine. A bit eccentric as people are wont to judge, but I must repeat, he was very fine. He accumulated quite a fortune as you are both aware. He never married. And he had no close living relatives. So he conceived this unique situation quite a few years ago and discussed it with me at length. He had quite a number of relatives, most of whom he had never seen. He was very hostile to the idea of dividing his fortune into bits to be dealt out all over the country. So he hit upon the plan of choosing a single heir. He gathered all the clippings and data and pictures available concerning each of these persons and mused over them considerably. He figured that he had the number of each one. He was quite taken with all he could find about you two. Yes, he was quite taken. Had he lived I do not doubt but what he would have called you to him that he might know you personally, but fate decreed otherwise." The lawyer sighed deeply. "He felt that two such healthy, attractive and amiable persons would make a charming couple, and so he decided to play cupid despite the fact that he would be a dead one. A very fine man, James Winthrop, even if some do say he was queer. Of course you realize that failure to comply with the regulations of the will, ostensibly that you—er—marry, the fortune will then be divided among the relatives or rather connections, for they are all far removed. But Mr. Winthrop was very set against such a procedure, you will re-

member. And now it is for you to decide. I wish the old fellow were here to meet you. A fine, extraordinarily fine, man." The lawyer shook his head solemnly. "Now what do you wish to do; think it over? Mr. Winthrop here, seems quite determined to—"

"Mr. Wiltse, would you mind if we discuss this, Miss Aberle and myself, in private?"

"Certainly not! Certainly not! You just retire to that private counsel room over there and discuss all you want to."

Once behind the closed door, Julia melted into Spencer's arms.

"To think, sweetheart, to think that we were engaged to each other all the time and never knew it! Oh, Julia, isn't it grand?"

Julia raised frightened eyes to Spencer's. "Oh, Spencer, I almost never showed up here. I felt I just couldn't go through with it and marry some queer fellow that Uncle James might have picked out. After knowing you, it would be awful! But just suppose I hadn't come?"

"Julia, I came up here and actually told the old duck that I wouldn't. Suppose I had gone away before you came?"

They melted again.

The lawyer waited impatiently for almost half an hour. No sound issued from the counsel room, so at last he opened the door. He retreated hastily at the sight of the enraptured two, locked in fond embrace. He closed the door, called his secretary, and began the business of closing the "estate of one James Winthrop, in accordance with the primary wishes expressed by the deceased in his will."





"It's no use, Larry. I'm through! You're not half the man I thought you were."



*"Is this seat taken?"*

## *Flirtation on a Train*

*He thought she was wonderful—then dark forebodings—did she give him the works? Just read it*

*By LOLITA ANN WESTMAN*

THERE were plenty of vacant seats in the train, but young Mr. Clay Stephens deliberately chose the one beside the pretty girl with all the parcels.

Removing his straw hat, he inquired with deceptive politeness, "Is this seat taken?"

She glanced quickly up at him with the most dazzlingly blue eyes he had ever seen. wrinkled her forehead into a frown and shook her head. After which, with ill-concealed impatience, she removed the parcels from the seat to her lap and onto the floor, making room for him to be seated.

"Thank you," he said.

During the next twenty minutes Mr. Stephens vainly sought an excuse for speech. As a general rule his eye-opener

gave him no concern whatever. In fact, his success with football and girls had made him quite conceited. But this was summer vacation and campus tactics were out of the picture. Besides which the girl beside him was somehow formidable. She had turned her marvelous profile toward him and was gazing raptly out of the window. Ordinarily a turned-up nose of which she was the possessor couldn't by the wildest stretch of imagination have been considered dignified. Yet, to Clay, her nose fairly shouted dignified disdain at him. She had seen, he estimated, no more than eighteen summers.

He tried staring at her, studying her frankly, but her full ripe lips only drew up in the corners in a definite refusal to ac-

knowledge his presence. He tried clearing his throat, then as that produced no results, he had a fit of coughing. Out of breath from his exertions, he still was forced to gape at that uncompromising nose and mouth and chin and the merest wisp of reddish hair under a small off-the-face little hat.

Well, apparently she wouldn't even care if he choked, he sulked gloomily. Quite inadvertently, his knee slipped and touched hers—beautifully rounded under her sheer flowered chiffon. He murmured an apology but she didn't seem to notice or hear.

Was she deaf or just high-hat? Who did she think she was anyway—to treat the Campus God in this frigid manner? Well, there were plenty of girls in his world. Five of them had literally fought over him at the club dance last night. Two of them had sworn at him and called him a conceited pig. Whereupon he expanded his chest still further, grinned and walzed off with his lucky choice. Why shouldn't he be conceited? He had everything, he figured very fairly and complaisantly. Looks, a wealthy father, a good line. No wonder the girls went nuts about him.

With an audible sigh, Mr. Stephens flexed his muscles. Already the train had reached the drab station at Tuckahoe. Commuters were folding their evening papers and vacating the seats all around him—but Clay Stephens did not move. Neither did the girl.

Luck or Fate or whoever attends to such emergencies was with young Clay Stephens that day, however. The clouds which had been gathering for an ominous conference, suddenly made a decision and, rolling apart, gave the parched earth a drink of water.

The windows were open and the storm came so unexpectedly that conductors could not move through the cars swiftly enough to prevent puddles from forming in the aisles and passengers from becoming drenched.

The girl beside Clay attempted, with native-born independence, to close the window herself, but in spite of her most frantic efforts, it stuck.

"Oh, dear!" she murmured involuntarily.

Clay could have grinned with triumph. Here was his opportunity. He seized it. "Allow me," he begged.

And, without a word, she relaxed in her seat while he reached across to the window and closed it.

A lurch of the train sent her forward against him for a fraction of a second and when Clay resumed his seat he was too dizzy to notice the beckoning hand of the woman across the way who seemed desirous of having him perform a like service for her.

It was the girl's perfume, of course. An alluring, subtle, clinging fragrance—was it jasmine?

And then she was speaking to him for the first time in a voice that was low and musical, but withal chillingly impersonal.

"That woman is speaking to you," she said.

He started. "Oh!" His gaze went from her to the woman across the aisle and he was on his feet. "I beg your pardon!"

The woman didn't appear to tender him her forgiveness. She was too wet. She didn't even thank him.

"I'm sorry I didn't see it sooner," he mumbled, and returned to his seat, turning up the collar of his blue coat and shivering while simultaneously clicking his teeth together and looking wild-eyed. He could do all manner of things with his eyes. They were a steel gray and responded immediately to his dictates.

The girl beside him stared at him. "What's the matter?" she said in faint alarm. Undoubtedly she expected him to have apoplexy on the spot.

"I'm f-f-freezing," he chattered. "The atmosphere is f-f-frigidaire!"

The nose, if possible, became more disdainful and the eyes more dazzling blue.

"You think you're funny, I suppose," she observed.

Clay grinned. "I've been told I am!" he answered. "You think you're very exclusive, I suppose?"

"I've been told so!" she returned, nose in air.

"Very snappy!" he pronounced. "Snappy and exclusive. Well, that's all right. That's the way I like 'em."

"I'm so *thankful* for that!" she breathed sarcastically. "I just couldn't live a second longer if you didn't like me."

"Well," said Clay, "now that *that's* settled—where do you get off?"

"Hartsdale," she said.

"What a coincidence!" he exclaimed. "That is also my destination. May I have the pleasure of carrying your bundles?"

"Certainly." She began piling them into her arms as the conductor was already calling their station.

"When may I see you again?" he asked boldly.

She stared at him. "Never."

Irrelevantly he murmured, "The most beautiful eyes in the world!"

"Aren't they?" she agreed coolly. For once he had certainly met someone who was as satisfied with *herself* as he was with *himself*.

"But cold as the ocean," he continued. "When I look into them I feel as if I'm taking a shower bath."

"I don't believe you've been invited to dive into my pool anyway," she said very

snappily, and that was the extent of their conversation until they reached the platform. Then she directed him to place her bundles in a station taxi much as if she were directing a menial, and said, "That will do, thank you," and closed the taxi door.

Where she belonged in this suburb which had been his home since birth, he didn't know. He thought he knew everyone; of course, probably there were a few new summer arrivals. She was undoubtedly one of them. But she couldn't amount to much or he'd have met her at the country club.

Well, that was that, he said, shrugging his broad shoulders, and knew quite well that it wasn't that at all. Much as he disliked her self-sufficiency, her pert snobbishness, she intrigued him. His pulse beat irregularly when he remembered how she had looked as she placed her dainty foot upon the running board of the taxi. Feminine and lovely in the new long skirt, every curve of her youthful but fully developed figure accentuated by the folds and tight hip line.

Only one thing to do, he decided quickly. Follow her. He couldn't let her simply ride out of his life. She was the only female in a world of rushing, gushing females, who even remotely interested him. Probably because she was so darn uppity and indifferent.

Already the taxi's tail-light twinkled at him in the falling dusk; the taxi was halfway up the long hill which led away from the village.

Quickly, Clay ran to his mad, dashing long-hooded roadster which he had parked in the clearing earlier in the day. There was something not quite respectable about that roadster. It was a passionate yellow with an orange trim. It looked clandestine. It spoke of moonlight rides and gin in flasks.

Clay put his long legs under the steering wheel and whistled for the school-kid who was selling the latest edition. He felt in his pocket for his wallet, remembering that he had spent all his change.

His wallet wasn't in his hip pocket. Neither was it in his breast pocket, nor *any* of his various other hiding places. He had lost his wallet. No, by thunder! It had been stolen!



*She regarded him intently*



Suddenly Clay's jaw dropped. "Well, of all the dumb nitwits! An easy mark. It was as clear as crystal! His frigid, exclusive companion had robbed him! Robbed him in broad daylight within sight of fifty pair of eyes! It was simple to figure that she had done it when he leaned over to close the window.

Well, no wonder he hadn't recognized her as living in the town. She was undoubtedly a thief, probably escaping from some petty crime in New York. He had heard about these girl bandits, but, Lord, he had never expected to have one trim him. It was bad enough to be legitimately gypped by the little gold-diggers at college but to have a charming beautiful girl actually steal four hundred and fifty dollars was unbearable. Yes, sir. That was the sum of money his wallet contained. And his father had warned him he wouldn't fork over any more for another month. A fine pickle!

Well, by golly, she wouldn't get away with it! Not while he had a roadster that could beat any car on the road. Her taxi was at least a mile away. She probably thought she was safe. Well, she'd get mighty fooled!

Clay waved the boy away with one hand as he threw in the clutch. Like a demon the yellow roadster shot around the station, across the bridge and up the hill in the wake of the girl's taxi.

The chances were she intended riding around town until the next train pulled in. Or perhaps she was headed for the next station by car. Could it be possible that the taxi driver was a confederate?

Clay's roadster forced every car to the side of the road. His horn drove terror into the hearts of the drivers. He tore up the mountain side in high. If you blinked you lost him. The roads were slippery too from the recent downpour although the sky was blue again. Once he skidded going around a sharp curve. But he only laughed; a nasty laugh that brooked no good for the girl he was pursuing. He intended sending her to jail. No beautiful tears could melt him. She should get her just deserts.

At last the taxi loomed ahead of him. He had to slow down to avoid overtaking it. It wasn't going more than thirty miles an hour.

Clay's mouth set grimly. He wouldn't start anything. He'd just tail along. Maybe she'd lead him to the headquarters of some gang. There might be a reward in it for him. If it was too much for him to handle, he'd put in a call for the reserves.

The taxi continued on the road for another two miles, then abruptly turned down a fork leading through a stretch of dark woods. Clay expected anything to happen. Even a body pitched from the taxi into the underbrush wouldn't have surprised him. But nothing did. They were on the other side of the woods. Meadows rolled away to farm houses, indistinct in the gloom just preceding night.

The taxi gave no sign that it knew it was being followed. Another three miles were left behind. Then, at the entrance to an estate, the walk of which was lined with cedars, the taxi stopped. Clay gasped and stared. Surely the girl didn't belong here! Was she about to rob a house or, fearing pursuit, was she going to beg shelter for the night? The house was unknown to Clay. It was brand-new and had been built during his absence the past winter.

The taxi started away, continued up the road to a place where it could turn about and go back the way it had come! The girl was going up the walk, her arms loaded with her precious bundles.

Clay turned off his head-lamps and parked a few feet from the driveway. He'd better reconnoiter.

The girl wasn't in sight. Someone had opened the door for her. Clay walked on the grass up to the wide veranda which seemed to run across the entire front. It was a swanky hangout, Clay thought grimly, and peaked in a French window. The lights were on but the room was empty. It was the library and done in real leather and mahogany. Clay looked at the massive front door. Who lived in this house?

The answer was given him abruptly and in a way he least expected. Suddenly the front door was opened and he found himself looking into the granite eyes of a huge individual who was dressed like a first-class butler.

"May I ask, sir," this individual said with an ominous lift of black brows, "just why you are prowling about our premises?"

Clay was disconcerted, on the defensive.

"I was just about to ring," he stammered. "I want to see someone. The—the lady of the house."

This did not impress the guardian of the massive front door. "Madam is indisposed," he retorted, adding crushingly, "besides, we are not interested in book agents."

That speech enabled Clay to regain his mental stature. The nerve of the fellow!

"I happen to be here upon a strictly personal matter!" he said, throwing his future in the lap of the Gods. "Since Madam cannot see me—one of her daughters will do?"

"Which one?" asked the butler.

"How many has she?" asked Clay slipshantly.

The butler's spine stiffened. "Three," he said. "Do they know you?"

"One of them does—intimately."

"Miss Irene, Miss Helene or Miss Lois?"

"Miss Irene," said Clay promptly and rashly.

The butler then admitted him to a spacious entrance hall and sent a white-capped maid in search of Miss Irene. The butler was taking no chances. He kept a wary eye upon Clay as if fearful he might walk off with the family silver or the baby grand.

Miss Irene sent down word that she would see Mr. Stephens presently. In truth, she kept him waiting exactly twenty-three minutes, during which time Clay revised his opinion of the girl on the train. Perhaps she was a kleptomaniac, but certainly not a thief. This house did not belong to a transient gang. There was something solidly respectable and legitimate about it.

Miss Irene, when she appeared on the staircase, was tall and regal and beautifully blonde but she was not the girl of the train.

"I don't know you," she said haughtily.

"And I don't know you," admitted Clay. He turned to the butler. "I picked the wrong sister," he said. Then bowed to Miss Irene politely. "Sorry to have troubled you. I'll try Miss Helene, if she is at home."

Miss Irene looked amazed and disdain-

ful. It must run in the family! She said to the butler.

"Hugh, summon Miss Helene at once."

Hugh pulled a silken cord. Another maid appeared as if by magic, took the order and disappeared. So did Miss Irene, her evening gown trailing behind her.

Miss Helene, at least, was prompt. And, in contrast to her sisters, a lovely brunette. For, curses, she was not the girl of the train either! She bounded down the stairs in a hoyendish manner and regarded him with twinkling black eyes.

"I don't believe I've had the pleasure," she murmured, "but I'm always thrilled to meet a new man. Have you been invited to dinner?"

"No," gasped Clay. "Really, if you'd be so kind as to get your sister—the red-haired one—I'd be obliged."

Her hands on her slim hips, Miss Helene regarded him intently. "So—Lois has a mortgage on you, has she? Just my luck!" She sighed in exaggerated dismay and Clay, recognizing well that he was being unmercifully kidded, blurted:



"Didn't you lose something besides your heart?"

"Cut it, will you?" He didn't look a bit cocksure now; his good looking face was the color of an apricot.

Helene looked at Hugh. "Tell Lois her boy-friend is here," she said, adding to Clay, "If she turns you down, Big Boy—let me know."

Somewhat abashed at this familiarity, Clay watched the deplorably frank Helene wiggle from the entrance hall.

Another half hour, then at last—Lois! He might have guessed that her name would be Lois! And he had never known how glad he'd be to see her. She seemed like an old friend. She had changed to a Nile green evening gown. It had a lot of ruffles and a tight bodice and it revealed much more of her than it hid. It was a perfect setting for her brilliant red hair.

But, by this time, Clay was in no condition to meet those clear blue eyes. Her mere presence made his heart pound and his ears ring and his tongue awkward. He felt like singing yet he was as blue as the bluest song ever written. Could this be love?

"You wished to see me?" she asked coolly.

"Yeah," was all he could manage.

"You followed me?"

"Yeah."

"What for?"

"Be—because I couldn't bear to see you go out of my life!"

She was no more astonished at his words than he was. He felt chastened, like a little boy. He caught her hand.

"Lois!" he said miserably. "I might as well tell you and get it over. From the first minute I saw you on that train, I knew I never wanted another girl in my whole life."

"I've heard you have a glorious line," she sniffed but she didn't draw her hand away. Clay imprisoned it with both of his.

"You've *heard*?" he demanded.

"At the country club," she said demurely.

"Then—then you knew me!"

"By reputation. And I'd seen a picture of you."

"But you don't believe what you've heard! You mustn't! Honestly, Lois—if—if you'll

wait till I get a job, I want to get married!"

"Really!"

"Listen!" commanded Clay. "I love you and you love me. Why stall?"

She snatched her hand away then. "You're taking a lot for granted!"

He looked into her eyes and knew that he was. How could a wonderful girl like this love a poor idiot like himself? He turned toward the door, thoughts of suicide possessing him. Her voice came to him, full of laughter and tears and—something else.

"Didn't you lose something on the train—besides your heart?" she asked softly.

He whirled. She was holding out his wallet. "So you *did* take it!" he said dully.

"It was quite easy," she said blandly.

"But—but why did you do it?"

He stared at her stupidly as she came close to him. "Because I wanted to be *sure* you'd follow me!" she told him throatily, no trace of the disdain showing at all. "But, understand this!" she added severely. "If you ever give me the air—like you have almost every other girl in Hartsdale—I'll just about die!"

"You've got a long life ahead of you then!" Clay shouted and kissed her. He wasn't even embarrassed when he noted their audience.

"We knew she'd get you!" sang out Helene. "She gets every man she goes after! There were acres and acres of them in Cedarhurst—where we moved from! She's a dead shot! And when she heard about you being the town Romeo—she swore she'd give you the works! She didn't even want to meet you until she had her ammunition ready—but luck came her way when you sat next to her on the train. And has she won? Boy, I ask you?"

Clay's expression darkened. "I'm not so sure of that. Have you?" he demanded of Lois.

"I don't think so," she said in a small voice. "I—I think I fell the hardest."

"It's about fifty-fifty," said Clay magnanimously, but proved to her, with another kiss, that he was the one who had landed in heaven with the biggest thump!









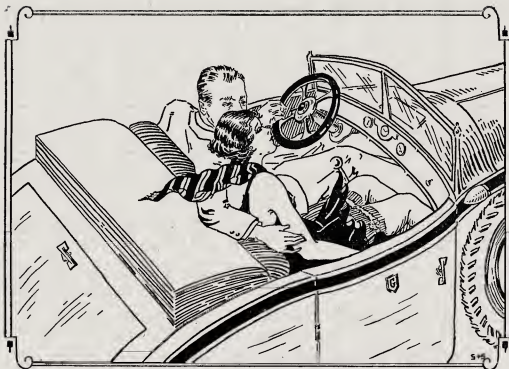












*The wind flicked her skirt back*

## Part Payment

By M. T. PATTIE

*He would gyp a dead man, this tough, unregulated boss of the road. He took in too much territory, this time, when he included a pretty little miss*

AN HOUR to midnight and the Ohio border a scant two miles ahead. Along the narrow macadam, a massive truck, leaving Parkersburg, Pennsylvania, two hours before, heavily overloaded, thundered through the darkness with whining gears and deafening exhaust. In the cab the driver drooped over the big steering wheel, struggling against overwhelming odds to keep his leaden eyelids from closing. Head propped against one corner of the padded seat, mouth agape, his helper snored frankly.

Like a lightning bolt came the explosion. The truck rocked violently with the detonation of the tons of highly inflammable film aboard. Through the rear of the closed cab belched a white sheet of searing flame, enveloping the two men before numbed

senses could be aroused. They fought desperately, savagely, like trapped rats, to protect their faces and hands from the blinding inferno. Frantic, screaming with agony, both dove headlong through the glass of the doors on either side as the huge juggernaut, unguided, lumbered off the highway and overturned with a rending of steel and wood.

In contrast to the white sheets of the hospital bed, the charred and blistered face of Joe Wagner loomed hideously. Frequently he writhed his scarred body beneath the tent-arched bedclothing and moaned piteously. Even the morphine, to deaden the pain, failed wholly to accomplish its merciful purpose. The soft-treading nurse sprayed the burnt skin with a soothing lotion

that brought relief to the twisted features. When the patient quieted, she tiptoed to the door and beckoned to someone in the corridor.

"You may come in now," she said softly, "but be very quiet. He's asleep, I think."

A thin, gray-haired woman in a shabby dress slipped through the doorway and stood twisting a soiled handkerchief in her wrinkled, work-worn fingers. A brown-eyed girl, in a simple flowered frock that harmonized with her unrouged lips and cheeks, followed. One would have placed her age at under twenty, so youthful she seemed. She walked over to the bed as the other turned to the girl in white uniform.

"How is he?" whispered the older woman.

"He's doing fine, Mrs. Wagner. He's been a little delirious from morphine, but he's got a good chance to pull through. You mustn't worry too much."

"My boy—my boy! Joe was always such a good son. Mary here, the girl he was to marry, is all broken up about it too. He'd only been on this job a few weeks after bein' out of work so much. But such long hours—" The handkerchief fluttered upward and she dabbed at her reddened eyes.

The nurse placed a sympathetic arm about the sagging shoulders. "Wouldn't you like to lie down a while? There's a couch in the rest room—"

"No, no—I'm all right. Just a bit nervous, maybe—from cryin', I guess." Then as though the nurse's kindly gesture invited further confidence, she went on rapidly: "They say the film was just in burlap bags—not in metal cans like it should have been. An' Joe'd been on duty for nearly forty-eight hours without any sleep. It's too much for a body to stand—"

"You'll have to excuse me, Mrs. Wagner," the nurse interrupted the discourse. "I must attend to another patient. You may only stay a few minutes. The doctor says he must have all the quiet possible."

"How is the other boy, Miss?"

"He died this morning."

After the nurse had gone, the gray-haired woman joined the girl by the bedside. The patient stirred; the blackened eyelids fluttered in a vain attempt to open.

"Is—that you—mother?" The words issued faintly through the shriveled lips.

"Yes, yes, Joey boy! Mary and I are right here beside you."

A shadow of a smile flicked across Joe's face. "Mary—" he muttered.

"What is it, Joe?" The girl bent over eagerly.

"Look out—for mother—till—get well—"

"There now, honey; of course I will."

"Maybe—Giovanni—pay—"

"Don't try to talk, Joe. You just get well. I'll take care of your mother."

Suddenly Joe's face twisted in a spasm of terror. He tried to raise his head, but the effort proved too great.

"God!" he cried shrilly. "Let me—out o' here! The truck—on fire! I must—must—"

The delirium subsided as quickly as it came and Joe gradually quieted while the two women stared in dumb horror.

On the way out of the hospital a few minutes later, Mary bade Mrs. Wagner wait at the entrance while she conferred with the head nurse.

"I'm Mary Ward," she introduced herself to the austere personage at a desk in the corridor. "A—a friend of Mr. Wagner in four hundred eight who was in that truck explosion. I want to know if any arrangements have been made about paying for his room."

"No; there have been none," was the cold reply. "And if no one takes care of it, he will have to be transferred to the ward. He's been there a week now and we can't keep him in a private room without being paid for it, you know. But in his case, the ward would be a poor place. He needs absolute quiet."

"How much is the room he's in now?"

"Eight dollars a day. And he should stay there at least a month. A private nurse, which he should have, is forty dollars a week, plus ten dollars more for board."

Hurrying to the elevator, Mary made rapid calculations. Eight dollars a day meant two hundred and fifty a month. And the nurse would be easily that much more. Five hundred dollars! It was more money than she had ever dreamed of. She knew Joe's mother had nothing—it was his earnings that paid the rent of their modest home and kept them in food and clothing. The twelve dollars weekly she drew as typist



*She got out and walked*

barely met her own expenses for board at home and carfare. And Joe needed the best of medical attention at once. Perhaps, as he said, Giovanni, his employer would pay for it. She had forgotten for the moment. Of course he would. That was the solution.

But Giovanni, owner of the freight trucking service plying between Parkersburg, Pennsylvania, and Marlton, Ohio, proved unapproachable. When Mary accompanied Mrs. Wagner to his office, they were informed he was out. On a later occasion, when they stated their mission, the hard-faced man in charge, denied that anybody named Wagner had ever worked for them. They even tried Giovanni's home, but were refused admittance, and he would speak to neither of them over the telephone. Mary knew him by sight from the day Joe pointed out Giovanni passing in his flashy, cream-colored roadster shortly before the accident.

A week passed with Joe's life still hanging by a slim thread. At the hospital office they told Mary he would be moved to the ward the following week unless payment were

forthcoming. Instinctively, she felt such a calamity would be fatal. She grew desperate, though she presented a brave front to Joe's mother.

On Saturday evening of the second week, she appealed to her brother Carol, who worked for a firm of lawyers.

"Listen, Carol," she said. "I've got to get in touch with Giovanni. Mrs. Wagner and I have both tried to reach him at his office and home, but he won't see us. They told us at his office he never worked for them. I feel sure if I could talk to him, I could get him to help Joe. Maybe he doesn't understand."

"You know Marlton, Ohio, is where his trucks go. The head man there is named Grover. I've heard Joe speak of him. I want you to call Giovanni up tomorrow at his home. Tell him you're Grover, phoning from Marlton, and that you must see him at once about the truck explosion. He'll go, I'm sure. I know his car, and I'll be on the Marlton road and hail him for a ride. Then I can talk to him."

Carol demurred at first, but at Mary's insistent pleading he finally agreed. He got Giovanni on the telephone next morning and obtained the latter's promise to be in Marlton at two o'clock that afternoon, though it took all his ingenuity to play his part and arouse the truck owner's anxiety. Then when the noon hour neared, he drove Mary to a spot within sight of the Marlton highway, where she got out and walked the remaining distance.

It was shortly after twelve when Giovanni, in his cream-colored car, passed the outskirts of Parkersburg and settled down comfortably in his seat for the fifty-mile run ahead. A big cigar slanted jauntily upward from one corner of his thick lips. Whatever it was Grover wanted him for in Marlton, he reflected, must be devilishly important else he would have told him over the phone. He pondered a bit uneasily over it, but he felt sure he carried enough money with him to take care of any unforeseen trouble. There was nothing they could pin on him regarding the explosion. The ensuing fire had obliterated any damaging evidence.

A half mile beyond the city limits he slowed his car to a stop at one side of the road as a trimly dressed girl signalled. Not



had looking, he decided, his eyes avidly surveying the slim legs beneath the rather brief skirt.

"Want a lift?" he grunted, opening the door. "How far you goin'?"

"How far do you go?" Mary countered, climbing in and flashing a dazzling smile.

"I'm on my way to Marlton," announced Giovanni jovially. His glance roved over her with approval. "Glad to have company along."

After the car was in motion again, Mary stole a quick look through the rear window and noted with relief that Carol followed. It allayed somewhat her uneasiness as she wondered how best to broach the subject uppermost in her mind. For a few miles she sat in silence before she finally spoke.

"You're Mr. Giovanni, aren't you?" she began.

Giovanni turned a surprised face. "Why, yes," he admitted. "I am. Who are you? Don't believe I ever saw you before."

"I'm Mary Ward," she stated simply, her brown eyes full of appeal meeting his. "Joe Wagner, the boy who was so badly burnt in the truck explosion, is my—my friend." The opening over, she continued more rapidly: "He's desperately ill in the hospital. He needs money to get proper car. His mother and I have tried to get in touch with you, but we couldn't. That's why I'm here. We're poor—we haven't the money we need. Won't you help us?"

As he listened, Giovanni's face hardened. "So that's why you thumbed me for a ride?" he said harshly. "You might as well get out an' walk back." Already the car was slowing down.

Biting her lips to keep the tears back, Mary threw caution to the winds. "Don't—don't say that!" she pleaded. "I'll—I'll do anything if you'll only help Joe. I can pay you back sometime."

The wind, whipping through the open window, flicked her skirt back, revealing a pair of rounded, silk-clad knees. Her eyes on the stern face, she was unconscious of it. But Giovanni stared openly. His features relaxed and his big foot trod down on the accelerator.

A long arm encircled Mary's shoulders. Her first impulse was to draw quickly away, but instinct warned her such a move would

be fatal. Perhaps feminine wiles might soften his heart, she reasoned. She submitted dumbly to the caress.

"Listen, kid," grunted Giovanni. "Just what do you mean, you'll do 'anything'? If I helped your friend out, would you—be good to me?"

Mary's heart pounded as the import of his words penetrated her brain. There could be but one meaning of his intentions. She wanted to leap out, even with the car running. Then Joe's blistered face rose to confront her. No sacrifice would be too great if she could save him. She nodded ever so slightly, her head against the broad shoulder.

"This afternoon?" he pressed eagerly. "Nobody'll know us in Marlton."

When no answer came, Giovanni patted her softly on the cheek and pressed his foot more heavily against the floor boards. A half hour later he drew the car up before a dilapidated inn on the fringe of a small village a few miles from Marlton.

"I've got to meet a man in Marlton about two o'clock," he informed Mary, "but there's plenty of time. Let's get out here."



*She swayed dizzily*

He climbed out and opened the door for her. Mary, fighting to retain her composure, joined him on the pavement. She swayed dizzily as he led her inside by the arm.

"My wife and I want a room," Giovanni explained briefly to the unkempt man behind a tiny counter. The latter produced a dirty, ink-smeared register, which Giovanni signed with a fictitious name. Her head averted, Mary failed to see Carol enter, but she spun around as she heard his voice. In rapid succession of events she had forgotten him completely.

"Just a minute, Giovanni," said Carol crisply. "Better come outside unless you'd rather talk in here."

Giovanni started to retort viciously, but he thought better of it. He followed Carol out to the road without a word. Mary could tell from his nervous manner he was uneasy.

"I'm no lawyer," said Carol crisply when they were out of hearing of the veranda loungers, "but you don't need one to tell you that you've got yourself into a nice jam. There's still a federal law about bringing girls across a state line for immoral purposes. This is Ohio, you know."

Giovanni's jaw drooped alarmingly as Carol continued evenly.

"It'll be easy to identify you," he said with chilling candor. He nodded his head toward the hotel. "There's plenty of witnesses. I'm going in to Marlton to report this."

Visions of prison bars rose before Giovanni's eyes. His face became ashen. A friend had been given a stiff sentence for the same offense. As Carol turned as though to go, he caught him by the arm.

"Listen," he pleaded, "there's no need of that. There's no harm been done. I'm willing to pay something. How about a century?"

"A hundred?" Carol scoffed. "Not enough."

"How much, then?"

"A thousand."

"A grand? You're crazy. I won't do it."

Carol shrugged and started for his machine. Again Giovanni halted him.

"You win," he snarled. "But it's a hold-up." He brought out a thick wallet and counted out crisp notes in Carol's palm. A moment later his cream-colored coupe had vanished toward Marlton.

"How far is it to the Pennsylvania line?" Carol addressed one of the men in front of the hotel.

"You're there now, mister. This hotel's just outside of Ohio."



Kit: "My husband never goes out looking for trouble."

Kat: "I suppose he gets plenty at home."



## Not Suspected

*Many true words are said in jest  
—here they came home quickly*

By BYRNE HORNE

**J**OHN MARTINSON always left his office early and walked home, unless it was raining. "Keeps me fit!" he told Molla, his wife. "A fellow needs exercise after sitting all day at a desk."

For Olga he had a different explanation. "When I walk, I can just slip in here unobserved, and nobody's any the wiser," he told her.

"Your wife does not suspect?" Olga asked.

"Not the slightest, baby! And I take care to give her no cause for suspicion."

"And you do not suspect her?" Olga inquired naively.

Martinson stared at her. Then he chuckled amusedly. "You don't know Molla," he

said. "She thinks I'm the only man in the world."

So John Martinson continued to go to work by trolley instead of in his car. Each morning he waved good-bye to Molla. And he continued to walk home, over the bridge and through the park, late each afternoon. But one afternoon, passing a narrow leafy path, he stopped suddenly. On a park seat not a dozen yards away was a young man. The thing in his hand was undoubtedly a revolver, and he was raising it to his temple.

"Suicide!" Martinson gasped. Then, almost with the same breath, he shouted: "Hey, there!" and ran forward.

The young man turned sharply at the in-

terruption and the revolver clattered to the ground. Martinson retrieved it and dropped it into his coat pocket. Then he sat down beside the other and eyed him appraisingly. He was perhaps a year or two younger than Martinson, quite handsome, and well and tastefully dressed, but on his face was a look of utter despair.

"Out of work?" Martinson asked.

"That is the least of my worries!" The other took out a wallet, and Martinson saw that it fairly bulged with bills, most of them of large denomination.

"Then it must be a woman!" he said.

The other nodded.

"Turn you down?"

"She's already married!"

"Tough luck! But there are others! Why not—"

"There are no others like her."

"You think so now, but perhaps if you were married to her for a little while—"

"I shall always think she is the most wonderful woman in the world!"

"Hm! Does she love you?"

"Devotedly."

"Then she doesn't love her husband?"

"Not since she discovered he was untrue to her."

Martinson smiled inwardly as he thought of Molla and Olga. He must be very careful to prevent Molla suspecting anything.

"Well, that's life, you know!" he said.

"You are married?" the other asked, looking up sharply.

Martinson nodded.

"What would you do?"

"I wouldn't do anything so foolish as you were going to do."

"Molla thinks I'm the only man in the world"



Martinson smiled at the irony of the situation. "The proper thing to do is to ask her to divorce her husband.

Then you could marry her," he replied.

The other shrugged impatiently. "There is only one cause for divorce in this state, and she has no proof against her husband; at least, none that would stand up in a court of law. But I didn't ask you what was the proper thing to do. I asked what you would do."

"Well, if you put it that way—" Martinson pondered heavily.

"If I was as well fixed for money as you seem to be," he said, "I think I should run away with her, and let him get the divorce."

The other's face brightened. "Thanks!" he said. "I think I shall take your advice."

Olga laughed a great deal when Martinson told her of the encounter that had delayed him. "And you will tell Molla, too, I suppose?" she asked.

"Oh, no!" Martinson chuckled. "I don't think I shall tell Molla! She could hardly appreciate the humor of the situation, I'm afraid. Well, I can't stay this time. Molla doesn't like me to keep dinner waiting, and I mustn't give her cause for suspicion. Good-bye, my dear. I won't be delayed tomorrow, I hope."

Martinson slipped out quietly and mingled with the homegoing crowd. When he reached his own home he found the front door ajar as usual.

"Hello, Molla, dear!" he called. "Here I am, and hungry as a hunter, as usual. Mmm, that dinner smells good."

But no petite figure ran from the kitchen to greet him.

"Molla!" he called again. "Hm! Well,



dinner's cooking anyway. She probably ran over to the neighbor's for something."

He went into the bathroom and washed. When he came out there was still no sign of Molla, so he went into the kitchen. On the table was a note propped against a coffee

can. He picked it up, then started as he noticed it was not in Molla's handwriting.

Slowly he read it:

"Thanks for the advice, Martinson. I took it. Keep the gun. You might like to use it when you have loaded it!"



She: "Do you give a girl a feed every time you take her on a date?"

He: "Only if she's hungry for kisses."

# Army Love

Episode No. 5

## SHOTGUN WEDDING

By GENERAL "X"

**C**HARLEY WILLS was an attractive young Lieutenant, stationed under me at Fort Wilson during the war. At one time, he was sent up to Jonesville to inspect 155 mm. shells which were being turned at the small machine shop which constituted the major industry of that tiny country town.

Mary Holmes had lived all her life—which was only eighteen years thus far—in Jonesville.

Lieutenant Wills had hired a small runabout—at Government expense—from the Brennan garage, for the period of his stay; and at the moment this story begins was taking Mary Holmes for a drive. Or rather, they were parked on a wood-road on the outskirts of Jonesville.

The young officer was saying, "You might just as well give in now as later, Mary, for I've a way with me which is irresistible. Some day I'm going to get you. Eventually, why not now?"

Mary deftly removed his arm from around her shoulders.

"You think you're mighty smart, don't you, Mr. City Slicker?" said she. "Well, it'll take somebody smarter than you to get Little Mary, even if you are in the Army, with a wife in every port."

"You've got us mixed up with the Marines, Mary dear," Wills replied, grinning broadly, not in the least nonplussed. "Well, we'll see. I always get my girl."

"You've got yourself mixed up with the Northwest Mounted Police," Mary retorted. "And anyhow, nobody gets little Mary, until she wants to be had."

"We'll see," Wills repeated.

One afternoon, two months later, Lieutenant Wills drove hurriedly up to the Brennan garage, looking very furtive and

excited. Dragging a suitcase from the car, he rushed into Brennan's office.

"How much do I owe you?" he panted.

"Now, what's the hurry; what's the hurry?" soothed the proprietor. "Wait till I figger it out, can't ye?"

"Look here, Don," panted the Army officer. "I've got to get out of this town while the getting's good. I've been a bit too familiar with Mary Holmes and her family are apt to be after me with a shotgun. So don't tell 'em you saw me. You're a good friend of mine. I've given you a lot of business, and I'm counting on you. I'm going to hide down by the freight house, and hop the 3.18 when it comes by."

Don Brennan made out the bill; and the Lieutenant paid it and hurried off. Then the garageman looked up at his clock. Two-thirty; plenty of time for what he planned to do.

Mebbe he was a good friend of this Army feller; but he was a better friend, and a friend of longer standing, of the entire Holmes family.

So, as soon as the lieutenant was out of sight, Brennan hopped into the runabout, and sped toward the Holmes farmhouse.

Meanwhile, Mary Holmes lay face down on her bed in tears. Her father, hearing her sobs, stomped upstairs and rapped on the door.

"What's the matter, daughter?" he asked in a kindly voice.

Mary got off the bed, smoothed her clothes, dabbed her eyes, and unlocked the door.

"It's n-nothing, dad," she replied. "Only that p-pup of an Army Lieutenant has g-gone off and left me—"

"What!" exploded old man Holmes, horrified.

"N-no, dad, n-nothing like that," sobbed

the girl, sensing the implication in her father's tone, "only Charley promised to take me to the strawberry festival tonight, and so I turned down several other boys, and now he's rushing back to Fort Wilson, and I haven't anyone to go with. He might at least have stayed until tomorrow. I don't believe that his Army orders are so definite that he couldn't stay over just one more day."

Wagging his head thoughtfully, Mr. Holmes stomped down the stairs again.

Just at this moment Don Brennan, the garageman, burst into the house, and found Mr. Holmes all primed for the news which he had to tell him. So that a few minutes later the Holmes car, with the old man and his son Bud, were following Don Brennan back to town.

Lieutenant Wills, as he had told Brennan, was hiding behind the freight house, and was easily corralled, white and shaking, rendered all the more pitiful a figure by the uniform which he wore. Then, while the Holmeses drove back with him to their farm, Brennan was sent for a minister.

"Why, Charley!" exclaimed Mary, as the party drew up at the farmhouse door.

"We've brought him back to do the square thing by you," explained her father grimly.

"Oh, goody!" said she, clapping her hands, and drying her eyes on the corner of her apron. "Then you will take me to the festival tonight, Charley, won't you?"

Lieutenant Wills grimaced sheepishly.

"Naw!" burst out Mary's brother, Bud. "We're going to make him marry you, that's what we are."

"No, dad, no!" exclaimed Mary, turning, shaken and surprised, toward old man Holmes.

But her father grimly nodded his head.

"No one can wrong my daughter, and git away with it," he asserted sententiously. "I

don't intend ter hev no war babies in the Holmes family."

"But, dad, he hasn't 'wronged' me. Really he hasn't. Not in the way that you mean. And besides, I don't want to marry him," she stormed.

"'Twon't do you no good to stand up for the wretch," replied the old farmer. "He's goin' ter marry you, and you're goin' ter marry him, and thet's all there is tew it."

In came Don Brennan with the minister.

And so, in due course, a cringing Charley Wills in Army uniform, and a raging protesting Mary Holmes, were duly made man and wife.

"Now git the devil out of here, both of you," shouted Pa Holmes, "and never let me see either of you again, the rest of my life."

Lieutenant Wills drew himself erect with a peculiar gleam in his eyes. Then, turning to Don Brennan, he tossed him a half a dollar.

"May I use your car to get to the station?" he asked. "I've missed the 3.18, but I can still make the 4.06, if I hurry."

Then he very gently helped his weeping bride into the Brennan runabout.

As they drove off together, he turned to her and said, "It was very decent of you to stand up for me the way you did. I admire your spunk."

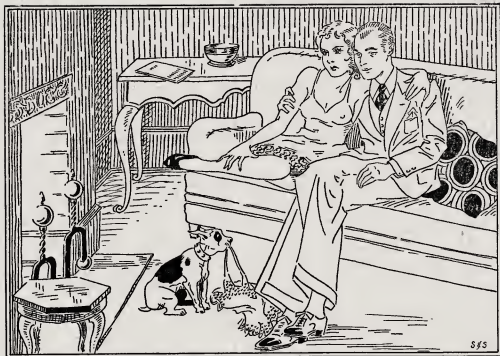
"But you know, as well as I do," she wept, "that that was all rot about your having to marry me. Why, you never so much as laid a finger on me."

"Oh, I know it all right, and so do you," he replied with a grin. "But I fooled your old man. He didn't make me marry you; he made you marry me. Remember how I warned you that I was going to get you sooner or later. Well, I have."

And that is how Lieutenant Charley Wills brought a bride back with him to Fort Wilson.







*Hanging from his mouth was a filmy, pink chemise*

## A Bull in Lingerie

*Neal's good-intentioned pup got him into a terrible jam, but luck was with him—he put over his trick successfully*

By ROLAND HERBERT

NEAL HYLAND walked quickly up the steps of the Reynolds mansion and rang the doorbell at the side of the imposing entrance. He waited nervously and it seemed ages before a maid opened the door.

"Please tell Miss Reynolds that Mr. Hyland is calling," he said.

"Yes, sir. Miss Reynolds is expecting you. She said for you to wait in the library. She will be down in a few minutes." She took his hat and coat and showed him into the room.

Neal settled himself in a comfortable chair, lit a cigarette and sat there nervously watching the door. He should have felt perfectly at ease in this house, for ever since

he was a boy it had been almost as much his home as his father's estate near by. But he was uneasy and his pulse beat rapidly. He had always felt that way when he was near Sylvia Reynolds, ever since they were kids together.

He couldn't quite understand his feelings toward her. Sometimes she seemed so feminine and helpless he wanted to protect her, to shield her from all the world no matter what the cost. At other times, particularly of late, he had longed to crush her beautiful body close in his arms, to overwhelm her with the fire of his passion.

Did she love him, too? Could he set fire to the smouldering passion hidden somewhere deep in her heart or would she al-

ways be only a friend? He had to know. He couldn't stand the suspense much longer or he would go mad. He hoped this evening would decide, and leave him the happiest, or most miserable, of men.

Would she be responsive to his mood, alive, full of life and eager for his love, or would she have that aloof, "touch-me-not" attitude that was becoming so frequent of late? He wondered and waited for her anxiously.

Suddenly she appeared in the doorway. He sprang to his feet with a gasp of admir-



*More beautiful than ever*

ation as she came toward him, a blood stirring vision clad in a clinging jet black gown which wrapped itself lovingly around her divinely molded form, accentuating every curve of her beautiful body. The low cut gown gave scant cover to her perfectly rounded breasts which stirred invitingly with the motion of her body. The whiteness of her skin and the shimmering gold of her hair were more beautiful than ever.

He felt a wild desire to take this beautiful

woman in his arms, to press his burning lips on hers and hold her close, but he restrained himself for he had learned that such a move would surely bring out the forbidding side of her nature, and he didn't want that tonight. She seemed unusually warm and womanly and he wanted her to stay that way.

"It's wonderful to see you again, Neal," she said softly, with a gentle squeeze of her hand. "I've missed you while you've been away—more than I realized I could."

"The days have been dark and lonely for me, too, Sylvia. I've counted the minutes until I'd be back here with you. I've longed for this evening when we could be happy together again, just we two, away from the rest of the world."

She blushed a little and a strange light came into her eyes. Her heart beat wildly in a new disturbing manner and she was a little afraid of the strange sensation.

"What would you like to do?" he continued. "Dance, the theatre, an opera, anything you say."

The strange spell still held her. "Let's not go where there's a crowd. Don't you know some place where it is quiet, where we can relax and be ourselves? I'm tired of the noise and confusion of the usual places."

"We can go to my apartment," he suggested, hardly daring to hope that she would really go there with him. "I'll build a fire in the fireplace and we'll sit there with only the flickering light of the flames to watch us. I don't know anything more restful and inspiring than that, and you always enjoyed a campfire in the woods."

"I'd love that, Neal. I can't think of anything I'd rather do. Let's go right now."

Sylvia stretched herself out in restful comfort on the soft davenport before the fireplace while Neal lighted the fire and mixed some drinks. Then he turned out the lights and came over to her with the glasses. She started to sit up.

"Don't move," he said, entranced with the vision of her soft yielding body as she lay there before him. "You look too comfortable the way you are. I'll sit here beside you and wait on you."

Her gown had worked up over her knees

and the flickering firelight showed entrancing glimpses of shapely legs and tempting white skin above the tops of her stockings.

They sipped their drinks in silence as their nearness to each other electrified the air and filled the room with a mysterious, compelling power.

He dared not speak and break the spell that held them. The dancing light from the fire made her more beautiful and desirable than ever before. For years he had wanted to take her in his arms and make love to her.

But something had always held him back, some mysterious barrier that surrounded her.

He felt now, for the first time, that this barrier was down, that she loved him, that she would be willing and happy to lie close in his passionate embrace and share with him the ecstasies of love.

Their drinks finished he put the glasses on the table and returned to her side.

"Happy, Sylvia?" he whispered as he put his arm behind her and leaned down toward her tempting lips.

"Happier than I've ever been before," she murmured. "I feel as though I've found the peace and happiness I've been looking for." She gazed up into his eyes so full of love and longing.

"I love you, Sylvia. I want you to be happy, the happiest you've ever been. I want you to be mine, all mine, dearest. Let me love you—now, tonight and forever. We'll be so happy."

"I love you, too, Neal. I've always loved you, I think, but something has always held me back—until tonight. Now it's gone." She smiled and raised her arms and drew him down to her, to a kiss that set their bodies on fire, to an embrace that melted their souls in the all consuming fire of passion.

For a few moments they clung to each other in rapture. Then she drew a little away. "Neal," she said slowly, "has there ever been any other woman here with you, like this? I couldn't stand it if there has."

"You're the only one, Sylvia. I swear it."

"I'm glad, Neal, so glad and happy. Kiss me again, sweetheart, and hold me close."

He drew her tight in his arms and pressed burning kisses on her willing lips, her eyes, her hair, and that thrill producing little spot in the softness of her neck.

Then, exhausted from the fierceness of this second mad embrace she let her arm fall limply toward the floor. Presently she gave a cry of surprise and momentary fright as something very cold and wet touched her hand. They turned their heads to see what had startled her, and there was Tony, Neal's little Boston bulldog, his tail wiggling happily, a doggyish twinkle in his



*She stretched out in restful comfort*

eye—and hanging from his mouth was a filmy pink chemise!

There was a moment of dead silence while Neal inwardly cursed his dog from the bottom of his heart. Then Sylvia sprang from his arms with a gasp.

"Oh! Neal! You lied to me!" she moaned. "How could you do such a thing to me. I loved you so, and would have given myself to you, gladly. I thought you were different, and honest, but you're like all other

men, beasts, preying on the love of trusting women. Oh! How could you do it, Neal? And I loved you so much."

"But it isn't what you think," he cried, grasping her in his arms and trying to soothe her. "I've never had any other woman here. You're the only woman I love, Sylvia. I've always loved you. I can explain this. I—"

She tore herself away. "Don't touch me! I hate you! I won't listen to you. I don't ever want to see you again."

She caught up her wrap and rushed toward the door, but he was before her, barring the way.

"You can't go, Sylvia. I won't let you leave without explaining. We can't let this thing wreck our happiness."

"Let me pass. I loathe you. Don't ever speak to me again," she gasped and tried to open the door.

He grasped her roughly by the shoulders. "You will listen to me! I won't let you go. Come here," he cried and drew her struggling through the door into his bedroom.

"Look!" he said, pointing to the bed.

She stared in astonishment. The bed was literally covered with intimate feminine apparel of every description; gorgeous pink, shimmering green, lacy, black, creations without number.

"What—what does it mean?" she gasped.

"They're yours, Sylvia. I bought them

all for you. I felt so sure you loved me I got them for a surprise—but not the kind it turned out to be."

"Oh—oh! Neal!" she stammered and turned toward him with brimming eyes. He held her close while their lips met in an all-forgiving kiss. Then he picked her up in his arms, carried her back into the living room and placed her gently on the davenport.

They lay there in silence for a little while, spent from the anguish of the cruel interruption. Then she snuggled closer in his encircling arms and whispered softly, "I'm sorry I doubted you, Neal. I never will again. I want to stay here with you, to have you hold me close in your arms, to be yours forever. I am yours, dearest, all yours. I love you! I want you! We can be married in the morning."

The flickering fire died down and turned to glowing embers whose rosy hue added enchantment to the throbbing silence, broken only by an occasional tender sound of utter happiness and bliss.

Some time later she stirred gently in his arms.

"Sweetheart," she murmured happily.

"Yes, darling."

"I'm sorry I said you lied. You didn't, but I know someone who did."

"Who?"

"The man who said, 'A man's best friend is his dog.'"



# Witness for a Lady

*It occurred to me to  
drop in for a chat*

*What a terrible  
tight place for a  
lady to get into and  
not the slightest  
chance of escape.  
Tommy Walker, old  
reliable, comes to  
the rescue and how*

By F. K. YOUNG



JOYCE CARSTAIRS had finished a dance and been escorted to a chair by her dance partner, when she felt a light touch upon her shoulder and, glancing up, gazed into the grinning face of Tommy Walker, the most persistent of her boy friends.

"Hello!" she said with a friendly smile.

"Lo!" grinned Tommy, dropping down beside her. Then without further preamble: "Will you marry me, Joyce?"

"Oh, Tommy!"—a touch of exasperation in her tones—"will you never grow up?"

"Sure!" he chuckled. "I've already done it. That's why I want you to marry me."

"Please!" she begged. "Let's not go all over that again."

At least, you're still trying to love me, aren't you?"

"Come outside," she invited, lowering her voice and glancing apprehensively about her. "I'm afraid somebody may hear you."

Rising, she took his arm and permitted him to pilot her across the dance floor, between the swaying couples. Opening wide French windows, they moved out upon a vine-covered veranda.

Strains from the eight-piece orchestra penetrated even the closed windows, impressing themselves upon their senses with a soft low sweetness, like music that is heard from a distance. Below them lay a moon-

drenched garden, beautiful in its calm placidity.

Through the interstices of the climbing vine, they could see flowers in bloom, fountains flowing, and cleverly contrived paths winding through shrubbery and ending in shadowy retreats.

It was the sort of garden one would imagine when thinking of wealth, luxury and artistic taste. It was quite in keeping with the palatial residence of the socially prominent Mrs. Jane Worthington.

For a moment the young people contemplated the beauties of the time and place. Then Tommy turned chummily to Joyce and asked:

"What do you think of all this?"

"It's wonderful!" she breathed, clasping her hands before her. "Everybody here is so nice to me. I can't help thinking I'm in heaven."

Tommy chuckled and gave her a curious glance. "Of course, it's all well enough. But to me it's just another of those things." He affected a bored yawn. "One grows used to them in time."

"Oh, stop trying to appear sophisticated!" exclaimed Joyce. "I can't be like that. If a thing pleases me, I must show my true feeling. If I belittle the pleasure I'm having, I don't enjoy it half as much."

Tommy grinned.

"Believe it or not," she continued, "I was afraid to come here tonight. Mrs. Worthington is so very rich and so prominent in society. I knew she would have many distinguished guests. I was afraid poor little me would appear horribly conspicuous. But Mrs. Worthington treated me so nicely that I soon lost my few feelings of self-consciousness. Everything has been just wonderful ever since."

"I understand," murmured Tommy, reaching for her hand. "I used to feel awkward, too, not having any money or being much of anybody. But I soon got over it. I found that most of these swells are only people, after all. When you come to know human nature, you discover that most of the high-hat members are only poor nobodies trying to put up a false front. The real swells don't have to be high-hat; their position is already assured."

"I guess the people here are all real swells, then," laughed Joyce.

"Just the same, at a party of this kind, there are bound to be a few phonies," replied Tommy wisely. "They're the hangers-on. They belong to the ragged edge, but family name or past prestige keeps the hearth warm for them. They are the people you must beware of—just a little tip, of course."

"Why, what do you mean?" Joyce was round-eyed, wondering.

"I saw you dancing with Wayne Gibson this evening," he remarked, apparently apropos of nothing.

"Oh, yes," she replied brightly. "I had never met him until tonight. But I think he's wonderful. He talks so interestingly, and is such a good dancer. He's rather good-looking, too, in a dark, fascinating way."

"Yeah. Suavity, polish, sophistication—veneers that hide the tough and rotten timber. Artificiality, false front! In the drawing room, it's swell, but in the boudoir . . ."

"Tommy!" she said impatiently. "I wish you'd stop speaking in riddles! You can't make me think you deep, anyhow. I have no idea what you've discovered about Mr. Gibson, but it doesn't matter. I've found him a perfect gentleman in every way!"

"Of course!" he hastened to say. "But all

the same, this is your first appearance in society, and it behoves you to watch your step. If Mrs. Worthington were to see you in a false light, she might not invite you again."

"Tommy!" Her tones were hard, her manner cold. "It wouldn't take but a tiny bit more to make me horribly insulted!"

"I beg your pardon! No offense meant, of course."

"Perhaps not. Still, I don't quite like your attitude."

"Toward you and Mr. Gibson, eh?"

She stamped her foot. Her eyes blazed. "That will be quite sufficient!" she gritted.

Tommy stared admiringly. "Gee, you're pretty when you get your mad up! . . . Shall we go in?"

"If you please . . ."

They returned to the ballroom in silence.

The hour was late when Joyce came to pay her respects to Mrs. Worthington, and she was somewhat fearful lest her conduct had not merited the lady's approval. She was shortly relieved, however, and made immeasurably happy by the reception given her.

"I have taken a great fancy to you, my dear," beamed the elderly lady. "I derive much pleasure from your company. I hope you enjoy your stay so well that you will wish to come frequently to visit me."

Joyce thanked her warmly and turned to ascend the stairs. Most of the guests had gone home. Only about a dozen had been invited to remain overnight. Joyce was one of the chosen few.

She was still glowing with pride and happiness as she closed the door of her chamber and prepared to retire. She had been offered the services of a maid, but with characteristic independence she had dismissed the girl, saying she had rather make her toilet alone.

Now stepping before a full-length mirror, she gazed smilingly at the loveliness reflected, and was thankful that, with so many people present, she had been looking her best. Her face was still fresh, her blue eyes were sparkling, and her blonde hair appeared as if she had just come from the hairdresser's.

But, after all, she had spent a strenuous





















evening, and she was sleepily. She yawned as she slipped down the bejeweled shoulder straps of her dance frock. Her feet felt weary as she stepped out of the fallen garment and stooped to pick it up. She was still yawning as, attired only in lingerie, slippers and hose, she turned again to the mirror. Yes, she admitted to herself, it had been a fine, late evening . . . as she crawled into bed.

Suddenly, a slight sound attracted her attention and she turned, a look of startled inquiry in her wide, blue eyes. The French windows were pushed slowly around, and a man stepped jauntily into the room. Quickly he placed a finger to his lips in a gesture enjoining silence, then he turned to close the windows.



The man took a step or two forward, his face lighted by what was calculated to be a reassuring smile, but which more closely approximated an evil smirk. Then Joyce found her voice.

"Mr. Gibson!" she exclaimed in low tones. "What does this mean?"

"Don't be alarmed, my dear," he murmured suavely, "My chamber is the one next to yours, you know. When I chanced to step out upon the verandah for a last smoke before retiring, I saw the light in your window, and it occurred to me to drop in for a little chat."

"But, Mr. Gibson, I can't permit it!" replied Joyce earnestly. "At this late hour

and with everybody else gone to bed! Surely, you must understand my position as a guest in this house. Your coming in here is terribly unconventional, and Mrs. Worthington wouldn't approve if she knew."

"But she needn't know!" purred the man. "Nobody saw me enter, and we are alone here. We have only to speak in low tones and—"

"No!" interrupted Joyce decisively. "This is my sleeping chamber, Mr. Gibson. You are an intruder. You have no business here at any time. I must ask you to leave at once."

"Oh, don't be like that! I only want to talk to you. I've taken a great fancy to you, my dear. In my opinion, you are the most beautiful girl that—"

"I appreciate your compliments, Mr. Gibson, but I am sure they will keep until morning. Now get out!"

Seeing he could win nothing by gentle persuasion, the man dropped his polished exterior as a person shedding a mask, and revealed his coarser, less gentlemanly side.

"Quit pretending!" he said shortly. "You know why I'm here. Be a nice baby and give me a kiss!" He extended his arms as if to embrace her.

Joyce grew tense and rigid, her eyes blazing cold, blue fury. "You come a step nearer and I'll scream and rout up the whole house!" she gritted.

"Will you?" he murmured softly. "Would you have our hostess and the other ladies find you alone with me? You partly undressed? Would you want them to come in and gaze upon this little tableau? What do you suppose they'd think? Why, that you had invited me here, of course!"

"But you know very well that isn't true!" she blazed.

"Of course," he chuckled. "But if you weren't preparing to receive a visitor, why did you leave the windows unlocked?"

"Why, I didn't examine them." She gazed wildly toward the windows and back again. "I supposed they were fastened!"

"Of course!" he purred. "But I doubt if the other ladies would believe your story, my dear. They'd be more likely to judge by appearances, you see!"

Joyce was obliged to admit to herself that the man was right. Women were ever

prone to believe unfavorable things about members of their own sex. And she couldn't afford to have her reputation jeopardized!

"It may be as you say," she admitted. "I have no desire to cause a scene. Nevertheless, you must go! I cannot entertain you here."

The man snorted. "You're a damn sight less innocent than you seem, though!" he said nastily. "I don't happen to be the right man, that's all!"

"You cad!"

"Well, then, gimme a kiss!"

"Get out!"

"You're in no position to cry for help. And you're not strong enough to defend yourself. Suppose I took what I came for, whether with or without your consent?"

"You wouldn't dare, you big bully!" Yet she said it with a catch in her voice and an expression of growing fear in her eyes.

"You are mistaken, my dear," he said shortly. "In affairs with women, I usually get what I most desire . . . Come here, you stubborn, little fool!" And with the words, he reached suddenly to grasp her.

She leaned back to avoid him. But his grasping fingers caught in her negligee and tore it. As the man's gaze contacted the curves of her bosom, his face lit. Again he moved to embrace her, and this time succeeded in sweeping her into his arms.

She felt his hot breath on her cheeks, his hands caressing her bare back, and was filled with loathing and disgust. Frantically, she struggled to escape his clutches, but being held at a disadvantage, was little better than lost. She tried to pummel his face with her tiny fists, but he quickly grasped her hands and locked them behind her back in such a manner that she could not free them.

The struggle then carried them across the room, and their swaying bodies collided with a chair, sending it to the floor with a crash.

"Stop it, you little fool!" he whispered savagely. "You'll have the whole house up, and then how'll you explain matters?"

"I don't care!" she sobbed. "If you don't let me go, I'll scream anyway, no matter what happens!"

"Oh, no, you won't!" he gloated, and

bending her far back in his arms, he sought to stop her voice with kisses.

His cruel embrace caused her back to hurt; she felt suffocated and she was afraid. She felt his lips, hot and scorching, and then casting all discretion to the winds, she raised her voice in a terrified cry for help.

But help was already rushing toward her. For a number of guests had been aroused by the loud, angry voices and the crash of the overturned chair. They had summoned Mrs. Worthington, and all were now hurrying down the hall. Almost before the scream died on Joyce's lips, there came a pounding at the bedroom door, and Mrs. Worthington's voice was heard, raised in excited inquiry.

"Miss Carstairs! . . . What is the matter? . . . Are you in trouble? Miss Carstairs! . . ."

Gibson stepped back, muttering an oath. "Well, you've done it!" he said to Joyce. "Now let's see you explain it!"

"Miss Carstairs! . . . May I come in? . . . Why don't you open the door?"

Joyce choked backed her sobs, drew a long breath and moved reluctantly forward. Timidly, she opened the door.

Mrs. Worthington, attired in sleeping pajamas, stood before her. Out in the hall stood a number of other ladies; some with wraps thrown hastily over their shoulders, others wearing only their sleeping garments.

"What is the meaning of all this noise?" demanded the hostess. Then catching sight of Gibson, she exclaimed: "Oh!" It was a little word, that "Oh!"—but the manner in which it was said meant much. "Why, Miss Carstairs, I—I am astonished . . ."

Gibson smirked. "Allow me, please," he said smoothly. "What roused you from sleep was merely a private altercation between me and—er—the lady. It's nothing serious, I assure you. I am sorry for the disturbance, Mrs. Worthington, and I hope you will forgive me."

"But what are you doing in her room, at this time of night?" demanded the lady of the house.

"My dear Mrs. Worthington, as long as you have known me, do I seem the sort of gentleman who would deliberately force entrance to a lady's room?"

"You mean Miss Carstairs invited you in?"

"Precisely! . . . giving me to understand that my attentions would be welcomely received. Once I had entered, however, the lady experienced a sudden change of feeling. She no longer welcomed my attentions and insisted rather loudly that I take my departure. I regret that I had no way of divining her exact wishes. Had I been able to guess in advance, I should never have accepted the invitation given me."

The lady flushed angrily and turned hostile eyes toward Joyce. "Well?" she said icily.

"Please, Mrs. Worthington!" begged Joyce tearfully, "I realize that this scene must appear disgraceful to you and your guests. I—I am awfully sorry for all that has happened. I know, too, that the appearances are all against me. But I wish you to believe me when I say that I'm speaking only the truth!"

"Well—go on!"

"Mr. Gibson is a cad and a brute! He entered my room by opening the French windows, which I had supposed were securely fastened. I assure you I did not invite him to visit me here. Nor did I give him the least bit of encouragement. I scolded him for coming, and begged him to go. He refused and I—I was obliged to fight him to—to protect myself!"

Mrs. Worthington stared, taking in Joyce's tear-streaked face, the humiliated look in her eyes. She appeared undecided, as if wondering which story to believe.

"What am I to do?" she said finally. "Since your stories are contradictory, it is plain that someone is lying! I have no desire to condemn an innocent person. At the same time, I cannot condone disgraceful conduct on the part of a guest. I must think of my position in society, of my responsibility as a hostess!"

"It seems to me," put in a sharp-eyed lady, "that any woman who *wasn't* expecting a caller would have sense enough to fasten her bedroom windows."

"Have you anything more to say, Miss Carstairs?" inquired Mrs. Worthington.

"I have explained everything," replied Joyce miserably. "I cannot help what Mr.

Gibson did, and do not feel that I should be blamed for his intrusion."

"I want to believe you, dear," sighed the elderly lady. "But, you see, it is your word against his—and I have known him a long, long time. If there only were a witness, somebody to corroborate your story—"

"There is one!" spoke a new voice.

The chief participants of the little drama had moved out into the hall while speaking, and none of them had been in position to witness the arrival of the newcomer. All were considerably surprised when Tommy Walker stepped out of Joyce's room and joined them.

"Folks," he announced dramatically, "I heard Miss Carstairs tell of what happened between her and Mr. Gibson, and I know for a fact that every word of her story is true. You doubt it because appearances seem to be against her. But Gibson lies, and he knows he lies! With my own eyes I saw him enter by way of the windows, just as Miss Carstairs has described. And I overheard all that passed between them!"

"Ah!" Mrs. Worthington gave a sigh of obvious relief. "I am sincerely glad to hear it!" She fairly beamed on Joyce. "I



"But see here, Walker! How do you happen to know so much about it?"

shouldn't have doubted you, my dear. Please forgive me, if you can!"

"But see here!" interrupted Gibson angrily. "How do you happen to know so much about it, Walker?"

"I saw and heard—"

"Where were you at the time? We spoke in low tones. Though you might have heard us talking, you couldn't have distinguished a word unless you had been in the same room."

"I was!" said Tommy stoutly. "But without Miss Carstairs being aware of the fact. She didn't invite me in, either. I slipped in before she came to retire."

"A likely story!" sneered Gibson. "I suppose you were sitting on the chandelier!"

There was a brief silence. Tommy glanced uneasily about the circle of curious faces.

"Well, no!" he muttered sheepishly. "I was hiding under the bed!"

"Oh, oh, oh!" groaned Mrs. Worthington disgustedly.

"Why, Tommy!" gasped Joyces, eyes flashing, cheeks ablaze. "How could you?"

"I take all the blame, of course," he mumbled. "I—er—apologize!"

"Apologies, in this instance, will not suffice!" snapped Mrs. Worthington. "So far as I am concerned, Miss Carstairs is innocent of wrong-doing. I accept her version of this affair as being true in every particular. But as for you two men, I must request you to leave my house!"

Tommy blushed and hung his head. Gibson turned a sickly green.

"That will be all!"

The men started toward their rooms, to dress and pack.

"The rest of you"—Mrs. Worthington indicated the crowd in the hall—"will please return to your chambers, and forget all about this unpleasant affair.

"Come with me, my dear," she said to Joyce. "I want to talk to you . . ."

The time was almost noon of the following day when Joyce returned to her modest dwelling. She was driven home in the Worthington limousine, with the Worthington chauffeur at the wheel. Descending from the car, she hurried up the walk that led to her door. Upon the steps sat Tommy Walker, the very picture of dejection.

"Hello!" he said, tossing away his cigarette. "When are you going to marry me, Joyce?"

"Come inside," she invited. "There is something I want to say to you."

"Okay!" He rose leisurely and followed her into the house.

"Tommy," she said, facing him in the living room, "what am I to do with you?"

"Why don't you marry me?" he grinned. "Of course, I know I'm an outcast from society and all that, but—"

"Don't!" she interrupted, speaking softly and moving close to him. "In spite of your faults—and they are many—I think you're rather wonderful, after all!"

He imprisoned her hands. "I didn't know what you'd think of me," he confessed. "But I couldn't let Gibson and those old hens put it over you as they were doing. I new darned well you didn't invite him in there!"

"Your belief in me is a beautiful thing, concile myself to your slipping into my reputation and cleared me of guilt before them all. But even so, I can hardly reconcile myself to your slipping into my room and hiding under my bed!"

"It was a rotten thing to do!" he admitted, avoiding her eyes.

"It would have been if you had done it," she smiled. "But, you know, Tommy, I'm still rather old-fashioned in some ways. Maybe it's feminine instinct, I don't know. But I always look under the bed before retiring! I did last night, too! And, Tommy, you weren't there! Now, isn't that strange?"

He grinned. "As a matter of fact," he explained, "I was out in the garden, gazing at the light in your window. I saw Gibson when he busted in. I was coming to save you. But it took me so darned long to shin up the porch posts that the show was almost over before I arrived!"

"Then didn't you hear what I told Mrs. Worthington?"

"No!" he confessed. "I didn't even hear what you told Gibson!"

"Tommy," she whispered, permitting her arms to steal around his neck, "you are the nicest liar I have ever known!"

"Well, then, why don't you marry me?" he begged . . .



## PUBLIC BENEFACCTOR

BY HUGH HUNTER

Oh lady of the cunning undies,  
Just across the court from me;  
Depressions would be far more pleasant,  
Were there more like you to see.  
Hours pass by like fleeting moments,  
While I watch your coiffure made,  
And I hope your lady's lady,  
Never learns to draw the shade

*Kate enjoyed life to the fullest extent those six months*

# Bargains

By LARRY LA RUE



*To love or not to love mentally cornered Catherine Wood—she made her decision—did she have her thrills?—we're telling you*

CATHERINE WOOD, twenty-one, romantically daring stenog, vacationing in Colorado Springs, met Jim Farley at a dance pavilion in Manitou.

Her full red lips, enticing pug nose in a comely little face, framed by a halo of golden hair reaching just to Jim's chin first attracted him to her, he admitted later. She later confided to him that his sleek black hair, inviting lips, flashing white teeth, and his big frame, plus the irresistible thrill of his arms while dancing had attracted her. It was mutual love.

He was a mining engineer, married, hadn't lived with his wife, Blanche, for three years, but not divorced. She was in a tuberculosis sanitarium. Kate was very short of funds, she told him, and needed work. He needed a stenographer.

The first two months she had her own room. He was out of the city two days each week, but when in they saw each other every evening. Very frequently he was apt to be a little late in leaving her. They finally decided that there would be more hours of rest for both of them if she would share his quarters in a large apartment hotel. It would be only a matter of time until they could be married.

Their agreement was made while riding

late one evening. They had come to his apartment, direct, the first time.

"You're to make yourself at home, dear, and I hope that you will like it here," he remarked, as he took her berret and light wrap. "You can have your things sent over tomorrow." Hand in hand they explored the rooms. "Only living room, dining room kitchen and bedroom," he explained. They entered the bedroom last.

Kate was pleasantly surprised when she found twin beds of ivory partially concealed by sea green silk spreads. She faced him, her hands clasping his waist. There was an inviting brilliance in her questioning eyes.

He was smiling, his face flushed.

The bargain lasted one week, and with frequent regularity was broken during the six cold months that followed, first time by Kate, and after that by Jim.

Kate enjoyed life to the fullest those six months, but with the coming of warmer weather Jim seemed to be drawing away from their close companionship. For two solid months Jim had pleaded fatigue of an evening and had retired early, or had stayed away until late, working at the office, he said. He had prevailed upon her to give up the office work some three months back, and time dragged monotonously. At the start of

their present arrangement they had agreed that she would not try to enter the social life in the city until their relations would legally permit her to be presented as his wife. She had no particular friends, nothing particular to do during the day, except routine housework, and the evenings had become a bore. She felt alone and was lonesome. Her physical makeup was crying for both closer companionship and activity, even if it were only pushing the keys of a typewriter.

His wife, Blanche, might live on indefinitely, she thought. Suppose she does live five or six more years? What would she have gained if Blanche were to become well enough to return to Jim. He would take her—she would be out. She had no bank account. A count of actual cash revealed only thirty-some dollars. No more than she had a year ago. She realized that she had given herself without any reservations to Jim, and in return had enjoyed a comfortable living. Should she live on in expectation, and later find herself older with no husband and no job, and out of practice as a stenographer? She admitted to herself that she did love Jim—but—she would go back to Kansas City.

She was well aware of her physical attractions. Even if she couldn't find office work there she was worldly wise enough to know how to attract cash from those who might want companionship, and still give only the surface with a smile, and at the worst only a kiss or two. But cash?—About thirty dollars! She liked novelty and excitement—she would hitch-hike what she had to, and use busses for the rest.

She packed her good things in her trunk and started it by express. A suit case contained only travel necessities—good shoes, a red slicker with a small automatic in the pocket, and a change. She would wear her low heeled sport shoes which needed shining. She left a brief note for Jim that she was going away, destination unknown.

She was picked up just out of Colorado Springs and rode to Pueblo with a college student going home for the week-end. A night bus to Garden City cut into her cash, but saved a lodging bill and allowed her to semi-sleep. She had walked for about an hour out of Garden City when a huge sport

roadster bearing a Missouri license whizzed by, slowed, stopped, then backed to where she was standing. She had time to note that the driver was slightly graying, but probably in his late thirties.

"Where to, young lady?" he asked, smiling.

"Kansas City is my final destination," she replied.

"Me, too, and I'm trying to make it this evening late. If you care to, I'd like your company." His tone was pleasing, his eyes inviting as he reached to open the door for her.

"I'm not accustomed to pick up people on the road as a usual thing, but after I saw your face in the mirror, something made me stop," he confessed.

"I hope the reality didn't disappoint you."

"No, it didn't, but you don't look or talk like the usual hitch hiker. Would you mind telling me about yourself?"

"Is a revelation of my character, habits and history the price of a ride with you?" she countered. She somehow enjoyed hearing his voice.

"Not at all, young—," he started, then stopped for a moment. "My name is George Watson, formerly with an international news service, but now free lancing—writer, you know—and I am curious about the various people that I meet. Forgive me for not introducing myself at first."

"My name is Catherine Wood—Kate to my friends—and I'm a stenog out of work, headed back to Kansas City where my folks are. I've been working in Colorado Springs. Is that enough?" She was watching his profile, closely.

"Plenty, Miss Wood." It had started to rain. I'm afraid you're going to have a free bath before very long. I didn't bring the top along with me this time. But you can wear my slicker." He had pulled partially off the road and stopped.

As he went to his bag in the rumble seat Kate removed her red slicker from the bag at her feet and had it on before he looked up. He was surprised and pleased. She wondered what he might say if he were aware of the little automatic resting in her right hand.

Over an early lunch at Dodge City George



remarked that he was sorry he didn't have a typewriter handy so she could take a news story for him.

"I'm sorry, too," she said.

"Do you really mean that?"

"Certainly, I do. I appreciate the ride, and I would like to be able to see what you write about, too."

"I left my machine in Wichita for minor repairs, and if we can make it there would you mind? That is a little out of our way, and means an overnight stop there."

Kate agreed to the stop. It would be a novelty and a little excitement, anyway. She felt reasonably sure that he would pay her hotel bill. The sun had completely disappeared behind black clouds. Passing low places in the road, water splashed up and drenched them each time. It was necessary for safety to drive very slowly most of the time. Then utter darkness.

To avoid excessive splashing George had slowed the car to barely perceptible motion going under a railroad bridge. The lights revealed a dark figure just ahead, and on Kate's side of the pavement. One hand held a huge rock, the other was signaling to stop. "Don't move," whispered George as he stopped the car. The figure motioned Kate

to get out. George reached over to open the door as she obeyed. As soon as her feet were on the ground the man stepped closer, the rock still threatening. The unseen motion of Kate's slicker was followed by a sharp report. The rock clattered as the man yelled in pain.

"Kate!" George leaped to catch her, his arms about her.

His touch thrilled her. "He's only winged," she whispered. The lights of an approaching car caused her to withdraw from his embrace, but not before his arms had tightened a bit.

The car stopped. The attacker had disappeared into the dark hedge. After a brief explanation the two cars passed. Kate was nestled close under George's arm.

"I guess you saved my life, dear, I would have tried a battle with that fellow. I was afraid he'd smash you with that rock. I hadn't made up my mind what to do when you broke up the party. I—"

Kate interrupted. "I'll admit I was just a little scared at the time—but I am more scared that I won't be able to type for you properly and I'm still curious about the article you want to write, and it's getting pretty late."

The clock under the steering wheel showed eleven-thirty as they entered Wichita.

"We'll go to the hotel where my typewriter is just as soon as we can find something to eat," he suggested. Search found only a Chinese cafe open. Awaiting their order George phoned the hotel for reservations. Kate was horrified at what she heard as he called what seemed to be an endless number of hotels. His face was flushed as he came back to their booth.

"There is a lumbermen's convention on and the city is loaded full. I tried all the hotels, even rooming houses,—and only one vacancy—at the place where my machine is—a double room—so I reserved that for us—giving it as Mr. and Mrs.—but I'll go." The waiter appeared with their food.

Kate's eyes were appraising the man before her. "I'm still curious about the article I'm to type."

"At this time of the night?"

"Yes." She intentionally allowed her lips to curve challengingly.

"A little," she whispered.



*He was smiling, his face flushed*

Hunger overshadowed emotions during the courses of an elaborate dinner, starting with light cocktails and ending with black coffee.

Shortly thereafter they were in the hotel room. She was taking his dictation straight to the machine. He spoke slowly. During the periods he was thinking she caught herself wondering what Jim was doing and thinking. The memory of her first night with him when she had broken their bargain was still fresh in her mind. She wondered just what the outcome of this present night could or would be. She rather hoped for the could. The end of the first hour found the article completed. He read it carefully, and approved it.

He looked at his wrist watch. "It's two-thirty. I'll hunt another bunk somewhere, and we'll get a good rest."

"You told me there were no other vacancies," she reminded him. She let her eyes glance to the two beds, and then back to his questioningly. "Why not here? You are darned tired, and I know it. So am I."

He eyed her closely. "Are you game?"

"I'll try anything once," she replied.

He put in a call for nine o'clock.

The next half hour passed and Kate was more than surprised to hear his heavy breathing within a few minutes after he had turned out the lights. "Good night, dear. I'm hoping we can become better acquainted during our ride home tomorrow," were his last words.

Listening to his breathing Kate wondered whether she was angry or glad. Just after the clock struck four she dozed. At six she was awakened by the bright sunlight streaming through a narrow crack in one of the drawn curtains. There was enough light for her to discern George's calm features.

Silently she rose and stood at his bedside. She caught herself just as she was about to touch his face. Something in the way his head rested on his pillow reminded her of Jim. Her gaze roved over to a nearby chair where his trousers were neatly folded. His key container was protruding from a pocket. He would not be called until nine—she would have more than two hours start—he couldn't very well prosecute since he had registered as man and wife.

She hastily fixed her hair and face and donned her clothes. At the writing desk she penned a note:

George:

Unless you catch me sooner you will find your car at the City Garage where we both are headed. I hope you won't be disappointed when you waken.

KATE.

No questions were asked as she presented the claim check for the roadster. The storm had apparently covered only the territory west of Wichita. The road to Kansas City was at its best for fast driving. She enjoyed the warm air rushing by her cheeks. There was only one stop for gas, oil and eats, and she was parking at the City Garage at four that afternoon.

"George Watson will call for this car before very long," were her instructions as she left the check at the office.

An elderly man lounging on the counter nearby lifted his hat as he approached her. "Aren't you Miss Catherine Wood?"

She was startled. "Yes," she replied, "I am."

"I have a car waiting for you just outside. You will come with me please." His tone was agreeably pleasant, but his eyes were scanning her closely. She was frightened and tired.

"I—I—am under arrest?" she asked.

He smiled as he reached for her bag. "No indeed, Miss Wood, I believe I have a pleasant surprise for you, though—just come with me."

Blindly, her mind in a confused daze, she followed him and entered the small coupe. She realized that she was very fatigued. She could find no words as he deftly guided the car through traffic, parked near the Phillips Hotel and guided her into an elevator. Numbly she heard the floor called, sensed the rise to an upper floor, and meekly followed him down a hall. He opened a door for her.

Jim and George were rising as she entered. She vaguely heard the door close behind her as Jim made a dive for her as she swayed. "Jim!"

In her first consciousness she felt something very cold but soothing at her forehead.

Her ears perceived a low pleading voice that was pleasant to listen to. Then she felt warm and possessive lips on her own lips. With an effort she forced her eyes to open.

"Jim?" She knew her arm was holding his face close to her face.

"Yes, it's me, honey girl—you are very tired, dear; don't try to wake up for a moment."

Her mental faculties came back with a rush of supreme happiness tinged with wondering. He allowed her to sit up, his arm supporting her. She tried to locate herself, but failed.

"Tell me, Jim—what has happened, how did you get here, and where is the other man who was here when I came in?"

"Will you answer me one question before I answer yours, dear?"

She nodded. She liked the feel of his shoulder.

"Do you love me?"

She pulled him down over her in a passionate embrace, her lips seeking his hungrily. "That is my answer, dear," she finally managed to mutter.

"I was frantic when I found your note, dear, but I had a lot to learn. Blanche passed away the afternoon that you left—that, on top of your leaving, almost drove me crazy, but I managed to arrange for her, somehow. The second night was hell. About eight o'clock this morning I received a phone call from George, who has been a very close friend of mine for years. He has always known what you are to me, even though he hadn't ever seen you. I chartered a plane, picked up George at Wichita, and came on here with him. Your note to him told us where to find you, and the man who brought you here is his father. George is a keen student of psychology. He told me the truth—about you and me—that you demand and need close companionship—that I hadn't

been giving you what a woman of your makeup must have from her husband, and—"

"But we aren't married, Jim," she reminded him.

"I'm coming to that, dear." He stopped long enough to accept the invitation in her eyes. "Blanche was buried yesterday afternoon. You and I will be married right here. The plane is waiting to take us back home again. Then—"

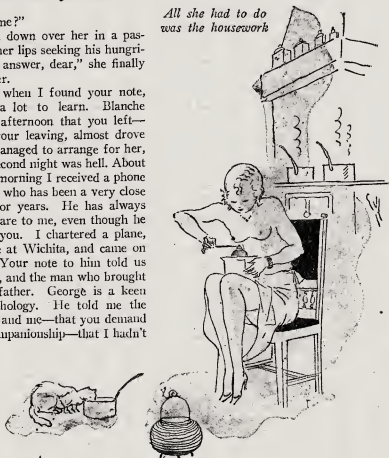
"You won't let me get lonesome again for you?"

"We'll be home shortly after midnight, dear, and if you should become lonesome it won't be any fault of mine. Will you love me—tight?"

"Try me," she dared.

"That's a bargain—our last one."

*All she had to do  
was the housework*



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## THE HUNTER

Laborer: "I'd like to have a day off this week."

Boss: "Going hunting?"

Laborer: "Yes, for another job."

\* \* \*

## DON'T BE A FOOL, YOU FOOL!

Gobber: "After all, fools make life amusing. When all the fools are dead I don't want to be living."

Gobber: "Don't worry, you won't be!"

\* \* \*

"I've stood about all I intend to," said the patient as they amputated both legs.

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\* \* \*

## NO PEACE ON EARTH

John Bloodnick: "Did you smile at your troubles as I advised you?"

Joe Oaps: "Yeah, and my wife hit me over the head with a broom and told me to wipe the silly grin off my face."

\* \* \*

## NOT A DAY—OLDER!

Gert: "Min had a birthday yesterday."

Bert: "Did she take a day off?"

Gert: "Say, you don't know Min! She took five years off."

\* \* \*

## LONG, LONG AGO

"Do you remember when women had wasp-like waists?"

"Do I! That's when I got stung."

\* \* \*

## HE HAD HIS, TOO!

New Yorker: "Why man; the sun rises and sets in New York!"

Ruralite: "That may be true; but the moon still comes over the mountain."

\* \* \*

## HENPECKED

Stenographer: "Could I have ten dollars advance on next week's salary?"

Boss: "Sorry; but my wife doesn't want me to make advances to my stenographer."

\* \* \*

## POWDER PUFF

"What happened to your friend, Jones?"

"Oh, he got hurt by a powder puff."

"Goodness gracious me, don't tell me such."

"Sure, he threw a match into a keg of powder, and it went p-f-f-f!"

\* \* \*

## WHAT DID THEY DRINK?

"When Mars took Venus out, what do you suppose he gave her to drink?"

"Nectar."

"Of course he necked her, you dodo, but what did they have to drink?"

**OH! TAKE ME ALONG**

He: "Marry me?"

She: "No."

He: "Then I shall go to an island where there is no such thing as marriage!"

She: "That's fine! Take me with you."

\* \* \*

**ECONOMY**

Ike: "I haven't paid a penny for coal all winter."

Izzy: "How did you manage that?"

Ike: "We live near the railroad tracks, and my wife makes faces at the fireman."

\* \* \*

**SHARP QUESTION**

Souse (registering): "Shay, have you got a penknife?"

Hotel Clerk: "What is it you wish it for?"

Souse: "I wanta (hic) sharpen thish pen!"

\* \* \*

**GOING DOWN**

"Is this the department store where you grind coffee?"

"Yes, madam. You're in on the ground floor."

\* \* \*



May: "How do you know he is a brush salesman?"

Fay: "Well, his index finger is worn down to the first joint from ringing doorbells."

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\* \* \*

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She: "What is puppy love?"

He: "The beginning of a dog's life."



# Mr. Exter's Hunch

By JAMES W. EARP

**M**R. EXTER'S doubt was no long drawn out case of an incident here, an incident there. His doubt was an overnight affair with nothing more tangible than that indefinable something he designated as a hunch.

Long ago Mr. Exter had ceased to question his hunches. One by one they had led him up the ladder of success until he had married Minnie Morrison. True, she was ten years younger than he, but she professed to love him. To date she had held up her end of the marriage game, a good wife, a thrifty one. So far as he knew—a true and faithful wife. Then came the hunch.

Who the man was Mr. Exter could not hazard a guess. The possibility of Minnie having a lover seemed absurd. Only his hunch told him otherwise. Much as he disliked the task there was nothing to do but prove it true or false. Work was impossible until he knew for sure.

"I want a good detective to do some investigating and shadowing for me," he told the Pincher Detective Agency over the phone. "And he must be reliable."

"Yes, sir, Mr. Exter. We'll send him right over."

Ten minutes later Mr. Exter was closeted with Private Investigator No. 7. To him Mr. Exter unfolded his plans. "I want to know what she does and where she goes and with whom during the hours between eight o'clock in the morning and five in the afternoon. And I want your report by phone at ten minutes to five every day except Sunday. This to be followed by a written report every morning."

"Yes, sir," replied P. I. No. 7.

The first report was very disappointing. So were the ones that followed. According to P. I. No. 7 Minnie Exter was the most faithful of wives. These findings annoyed Mr. Exter. His first impulse was to discharge P. I. No. 7. Evidently the man was

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## LIST OF PLATES

Plate I.	Nude	Adult	Fe- ma
" II.	Nude	Adult	Male
" III.	Nervous System of		Female
" IV.	Skeletal System		
" V.	Muscular System		(Posterior)
" VI.	Muscular System		Anterior
" VII.	Vascular System		
" VIII.	Respiratory System		
" IX.	Digestive System		
" X.	Male Genital Organ		in Detail
" XI.	Female Genital Organ		in Detail
" XII.	Cross-Section of		Pregnant Female
	Body with Child		

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loafing on the job or else was being outwitted. Careful questioning of his wife as to her movements tallied with those of the detective.

Nevertheless, Mr. Exter refused to be satisfied. Once he set out to do a job, he carried it through. A call to a rival detective agency furnished him with Secret Service Sleuth No. 2. To him he gave the same set of instructions as previously had been imparted to P. I. No. 7.

S. S. S. No. 2 nodded and went out on the job. His first report was verbal and came by phone. It was necessarily short because he was on the job and could not take time to give all details because of fear of losing his quarry. However, he promised interesting news in the morning report.

He did. Compared to P. I. No. 7's report, it sounded as if one of them was trailing the wrong woman. S. S. S. No. 2 stated that Mrs. Exter had dined at the Lone Trail Tavern and had gone for a ride in the country with the same man. He had lost the chase when he stopped to phone. If he was right the woman he was chasing was a live wire and then some. So was her escort.

For three days S. S. S. No. 2 filed his reports by letter and called by phone. The morning of the fourth day he called at noon, a note of excitement in his voice.

"Got 'em grabbed if you want to gather the evidence," he told Mr. Exter. "They're registered at the Bon Hotel as man and wife. Room 10. I've got the room next to them. Come over and ask for Mr. Brown—that's me."

Mr. Exter lost no time in getting to the Bon Hotel. He found Mrs. Exter and with her none other than Private Investigator No. 7.

"I couldn't help it," Mrs. Exter declared brazenly to a tabloid reporter. "It was the first time since my marriage that a man paid me attention. The first day I noticed him following me I thought surely I must be mistaken. The next day I knew I was right. I accused him of it and he admitted it. After that we became acquainted and fell in love. I hope my husband gets a divorce. At last I have found a real man to love."

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